

4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Start of school term – January 2021**

Further to my email yesterday I can confirm that the school will be open to pupils tomorrow as all the staff who are able to attend will be here. I would like to extend my thanks to all the parents who have contacted me to express their support for the staff at St. Mary's at this time. Many staff are anxious about returning to work with the current situation and I am so grateful to them all for the dedication, professionalism and resilience they continue to demonstrate.

This document should hopefully answer many of the questions you have about your child's safe return to school tomorrow and what we will do in the event of national school closures.

### **I am worried about sending my child to school – can I keep them at home?**

We know that children who do not attend school can fall behind with their learning. Children also need positive play, physical exercise and the social interaction with their friends. Isolation can be damaging to their mental health and well-being.

It is natural that you will feel anxious about sending your child to school with the current situation and we understand this. The Prime Minister stated yesterday that schools are safe places for children to be. Young children are considered to be at low risk from coronavirus and are very unlikely to become seriously ill if they are infected. We have put in place as many measures as we can to protect pupils and adults from infection however we cannot guarantee that people will not become infected as a result of attending school. If you decide to keep your child at home no action will be taken against you however we ask that you follow the advice for supporting your child with their learning below.

### **Will I be able to access remote learning for my child if I keep them at home?**

We will provide remote learning for pupils who are required to stay at home for one of the following reasons:

- Shielding due to pupil or parent being clinically extremely vulnerable
- Self-isolating after being in contact with a positive case.
- Closure of a bubble due to contact with a positive case.
- Closure of a bubble due to staff absence
- Closure of the school

If you choose to keep your child at home for any other reason we will sign post parents to websites they can access to support their children with learning at home.

**Will the school still be moving to year group bubbles rather than class bubbles?**

No. Due to the increase in the infection rate children will continue to work in their class bubbles with their teachers and TAs. Children in EYFS and KS1 will have different groups for phonics teaching but at all other times children will be in their consistent class groups.

**Will the children still be dropped off and picked up at the times communicated at the end of last term?**

No – the children will go back to the original drop off and pick up times below:

Class	Drop off	Pick up
Cherry	08.55 – 09.05	15.15
Lime	08.40 – 08.50	15.00
Pear	08.40 – 08.50	15.00
Plum	08.55 – 09.05	15.15
Holly	08.55 – 09.05	15.15
Juniper	08.40 – 08.50	15.00
Beech	08.40 – 08.50	15.00
Willow	08.55 – 09.00	15.15
Maple	08.55 – 09.00	15.15
Chestnut	08.40 – 08.50	15.00
Ash	08.40 – 08.50	15.00
Elm	08.55 – 09.05	15.15
Rowan	08.55 – 09.05	15.15
Oak	08.40 – 08.50	15.00

Children should be dropped off and picked up in the usual places.

**Will the school be providing hot lunches?**

Not for the time being. We will do everything we can to reintroduce hot meals without compromising the bubbles and we will keep parents informed of developments.

**What about people who are clinically extremely vulnerable?**

People who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to stay at home in Tier 4 areas. Government advice states that children who have parents who are clinically extremely vulnerable can go to school, however we are sympathetic to parents in this situation and support any families who choose to keep children at home for this reason.

**Will the pupils and staff be tested for coronavirus?**

Only pupils and staff in secondary schools currently have access to regular testing. The government has said that there are plans to extend this to primary school staff but not pupils.

### **Will children and teachers be required to wear masks because we are in a Tier 4 area?**

I have advised adults to wear facemasks when walking around school. Children of primary school age are not required to wear masks. Some adults may wear facemasks in their classrooms if they feel more comfortable doing so.

### **Will visitors and parents be allowed to come into school?**

All parents must contact the school office by email or telephone. We ask that parents do not come into school through the front door whilst we are in Tier 4. All meetings with parents will be by telephone or Teams. Visitors to school will be by prior agreement with the Headteacher and only in exceptional circumstances. If you need to speak to someone urgently please telephone the school office.

### **How will the school ensure parents safety at pick up and drop off?**

It is important that all adults follow social distancing rules at pick up and drop off.

- Please follow the one way system at pick up and drop off
- Please wherever possible send one person to drop off and pick up to reduce congestion at busy times.
- Please do not approach the teaching staff at drop off and pick up – if you wish to pass on a message to the teachers email the school office.

### **What will happen if the school is closed?**

The government have not ruled out the closure of primary schools although they say this would be an absolute last resort. In the event of partial or full school closures we will provide remote learning through Seesaw or Tapestry and Microsoft Teams.

Our aim is to provide some face to face contact with the class teacher through a Teams meeting at the start and end of the school day in addition to daily activities in maths, English and topic. Activities will not always require children to upload work and some activities will involve practical, interactive and creative activities to complete at home. Parents will also be signposted to websites children can access to support their home learning. Further information will be sent out to parents in the event of school closures.

### **I am a key worker and I cannot work from home – can my child attend school?**

The school will stay open for the children of key workers and vulnerable pupils. Children who attend school for face to face lessons will be expected to attend full time throughout the week. There will be no option for children to attend face to face lessons on a part time basis. Further information will be sent out shortly about how to request your child/ren's attendance at school in the event of full closure and how the school will be organized.

### **My child has an EHCP what will the school do to ensure their needs are met?**

In the event of full closure, Miss Selwood or Mrs Silins will be in contact with the parents of children with EHCPs to discuss how the school will meet those children's needs.

**I do not have enough devices or internet access for my children to do remote learning. How can the school help?**

If your child is unable to access remote learning for any reason please get in touch with the school by telephone or email as soon as possible and we will provide support.

**Would we be able to have books and worksheets rather than online learning in the event of school closures?**

No – we only have the capacity to provide one form of remote education.

**I don't know how to access my child's Seesaw account or Microsoft Teams.**

Please don't worry – it is understandable that you will have forgotten how to do this. We will send out instructions and login details again as soon as we can.

If you have any concerns or question please contact the school office:

T: 01666502275

E: [admin@st-marys-tetbury.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-marys-tetbury.gloucs.sch.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Woolley

Headteacher

## **Websites to support children with learning at home**

### **Internet Safety for parents and carers:**

<https://www.internetmatters.org>

<https://www.childnet.com>

<https://net-aware.org.uk>

### **Curriculum Websites**

[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary)

[www.twinkl.co.uk](http://www.twinkl.co.uk)

[www.topmarks.co.uk](http://www.topmarks.co.uk)

[www.tts-group.co.uk/home+learning+activities](http://www.tts-group.co.uk/home+learning+activities)

[www.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk)

[www.teachyourmonstertoread.com](http://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com)

[www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk)

[www.ictgames.com](http://www.ictgames.com)

[www.eduplace.com](http://www.eduplace.com)

<https://myminimaths.co.uk>

<https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning>

<https://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/learning-activities/science/>